Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original): A method of measuring the ability of a compound to alter HCV activity using a beta-lactamase reporter system comprising the steps of:

a) combining together said compound, a screening cell and a beta-lactamase substrate under conditions supporting beta-lactamase activity, wherein said screening cell harbors a first HCV replicon comprising a selection sequence and a second HCV replicon comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a beta-lactamase; and

b) measuring the ability of said compound to alter beta-lactamase production.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said cell is a Huh-7 cell or is derived from a Huh-7 cell.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 2, further comprising the use of clavulanic acid in an amount effective to enhance signal-to-background ratio.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 2, wherein said HCV replicon is a chimeric replicon comprising one or more HCV regions from two or more HCV strains, wherein at least one of the regions is a HCV-1a 3' UTR.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein at least one of said regions is a non-structural region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein said second HCV replicon consists of either a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 1 or a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said modified version of SEQ ID NO:1 contains SEQ ID NO: 1 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate and said modified version of SEQ

ID NO: 2 contains SEQ ID NO: 2 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 7 (original): A HCV replicon enhanced cell comprising a first HCV replicon and a second HCV replicon, wherein said first HCV replicon comprises a selection sequence, said cell supports chronic or persistent replication of said second HCV replicon and said second HCV replicon is different from said first HCV replicon.

Claim 8 (original): The HCV replicon enhanced cell of claim 7, wherein said cell is a Huh-7 cell or is derived from a Huh-7 cell.

Claim 9 (original): The HCV replicon enhanced cell of claim 8, wherein said second HCV replicon comprises a beta-lactamase reporter.

Claim 10 (original): The HCV replicon enhanced cell of claim 9, wherein said second HCV replicon is a chimeric replicon comprising one or more HCV regions from two or more HCV strains, wherein at least one of the regions is a HCV-1a 3' UTR.

Claim 11 (original): A method of producing an HCV replicon enhanced cell comprising a first and a second replicon comprising the steps of:

a) introducing into a cell said first HCV replicon, wherein said first replicon comprises a selection sequence,

b) obtaining a replicon enhanced cell, wherein said replicon enhanced cell supports chronic or persistent replication of said first replicon; and

c) introducing into said replicon enhanced cell said second replicon, wherein said second replicon comprising a reporter,

provided that said first replicon is present in an amount compatible with replication of said second replicon.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 11, wherein said cell is a Huh-7 cell or is derived from a Huh-7 cell.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of partially curing said first replicon from said cell.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 13, wherein said reporter is beta-lactamase.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 13, wherein said first HCV replicon is a chimeric replicon comprising one or more HCV regions from two or more HCV strains, wherein at least one of the regions is a HCV-1a 3' UTR.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 15, wherein at least one of said regions is a non-structural region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 15, wherein said second HCV replicon consists of either a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 1 or a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said modified version of SEQ ID NO:1 contains SEQ ID NO: 1 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate and said modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2 contains SEQ ID NO: 2 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 18 (original): A HCV replicon comprising a beta-lactamase reporter, wherein said replicon does not contain a sequence coding for resistance to an agent that inhibits cell growth.

Claim 19 (original): A chimeric HCV replicon comprising one or more HCV regions from two or more HCV strains, wherein at least one of the regions is a HCV-1a 3' UTR.

Claim 20 (original): The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 19, wherein at least one of said regions is a non-structural region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 21 (original): The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 19, wherein said HCV replicon consists of either a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 1 or a modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said modified version of SEQ ID NO:1 contains SEQ ID NO: 1 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate and said modified version of SEQ ID NO: 2 contains SEQ ID NO: 2 modified by replacing the NS5B region with a NS5B region from a clinical isolate.

Claim 22 (original): The chimeric HCV replicon of claim 21, wherein said replicon consists of either SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO 2.

Claims 23-26 (canceled).